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The Fitz Center
for Leadership in Community

Community Leader

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COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING IS FLOURISHING

*By Andy Badinghaus, AmeriCorps*VISTA*

Each year, when invited to talk to first-year students, the Fitz Center service learning staff says, "We can't wait to introduce you to our neighbors." For three years, the Neighborhood School Centers (NSC) project has been our top priority. In the 2008-09 school year, Fitz Center Community Service Learning engaged 300 students who offered almost 3,000 hours of service to our partner schools. During that same school year, 7,000 students in service-learning opportunities across the University contributed over 150,000 hours of service on the local, national and international levels. We anticipate that well over 300 students will participate in the Fitz Center's service-learning and community service opportunities at the NSCs this year.


This growth in student involvement parallels an increase in requests from the Dayton elementary schools for UD student help. In the fall semester, our partners requested help on over 50 projects. Here we highlight a few of the classes and campus groups who helped fill those requests at the Centers.

A group of 20 health and nutrition students led monthly exercise and healthy eating activities at Cleveland School. Through the influence of professor **Pat Dolan** (health and sports sciences), a student earning independent study credit is now leading these activities.

Carolyn Roecker Phelps (psychology) introduced two sections of her first-year students to the Fitz Center and the Neighborhood School Centers through a pen pals project at Kiser and Ruskin Schools. These 60 first-year students corresponded with youngsters about life and school, encouraging them to think about college.

Forty students in a child psychology course taught by **Keri Brown Kirschman** completed 10 hours of service in the Neighborhood School Centers. Each student helped in a classroom and worked one-on-one with students who needed extra assistance.

The department of languages continues to be an invaluable resource to the NSCs. In addition to requests for Spanish-speaking students, the department is working to satisfy requests for help in Mandarin and Russian.

The Fitz Center has been working to improve the ability of UD students to appreciate the context of their service at the Neighborhood School Centers. Certainly the classroom assistance and special programming is valuable to youth. Equally important, however, are the insights that UD students can gain about the challenges facing Dayton families and schools. 



Above: After tuning up donated bikes, UD engineering students give them to kids from Ruskin and Cleveland Schools and teach them bike safety and maintenance.



Above: Seniors Annie O'Connell, Emily Mumm and Grace Strzelczyk attend the annual National League of Cities Conference in San Antonio, Texas, where they met with the former director of the Dayton Civic Scholars program, Dean Lovelace.

Right: Dayton City Commissioner Nan Whaley and former Deputy City Manager William Gillispie address the Dayton Civic Scholars in September.

DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLARS: MINI-COURSE SUCCESS

By Anna Hurley, Graduate Assistant

This September, the Dayton Civic Scholars program added a new element to its program. We introduced an eight-week mini-course that allowed for the first time in the program's history all three cohorts to come together to collaborate with speakers, projects and events. Each Tuesday afternoon students met with city leaders and practitioners to discuss pressing issues facing Dayton.

The collection of speakers was engaging and brought their practical experience to demonstrate to students what they can hope to achieve in their future careers and how they can make an impact on the city. Speakers included City Commissioner **Nan Whaley**, former Deputy City Manager **William Gillispie**, CityWide Neighborhood Development Director **George Snyder**, Police Chief **Richard Biehl** and Program Manager for the Community Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence **Becky Gaytko**. The students explored topics that ranged from urban sprawl and Dayton's families and children to Dayton's education systems and gang violence.

The mini-course was the perfect addition to the Dayton Civic Scholars program. It was well received by the students and will now become a permanent part of the Scholars' experience. We are looking forward to the course in the spring semester, highlighted by new topics that will range from the young creative class to community policing efforts. 

Two Scholars Graduate

This December, the Dayton Civic Scholars program graduated two seniors. Scholars **Emily Mumm** and **Courtney Moser** have been outstanding members of the 2010 cohort and will be missed.

Emily received a Bachelor of Arts in sociology with a minor in social work. She has returned to her home state of Missouri and plans to attend graduate school in social work and public health in St. Louis in the future. Emily will also be getting married this spring. Courtney received a Bachelor of Science in education with a focus on the Urban Teacher Academy. She has returned home to Kentucky to begin ministry work in local social justice and ministry organizations. Courtney will also be leading a high school ministry retreat and attending a mission trip to New York City in the spring. We wish Emily and Courtney all the best in the newest chapter of their lives.

This semester, Civic Scholar **Katie Zehner** has been selected to participate in the Fitz Center's Semester of Service program. She has been placed at the Dayton Christian Center. Congratulations, Katie.




NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL CENTERS PROJECT WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS

By Don Vermillion, Director of Public Projects

Dayton's Neighborhood School Centers (NSC) staff is excited about the new energy brought by its recent additions to the NSC team. **Teresa Wendell** started as site coordinator of Kiser School in September as an employee of the Salvation Army. Teresa has had several active roles in the Dayton community and will bring her experiences and partnerships to the NSC table. She is working to increase parent involvement in the school, especially by establishing the Kiser Booster Club. She is also dedicated to getting young people involved in Kiser program planning. From the feedback she received when she began the job, she has decided to start a leadership academy for students. Teresa is beginning and sustaining other initiatives, including neighborhood programming and a new health awareness project, a partnership between Kiser School and Wright State University. Teresa has replaced long-time Fitz Center employee and partner **Amber Rose**, who has been promoted as director of education at the new Salvation Army Kroc Center in the McCook Field/Old North Dayton neighborhood. Amber will remain connected to the NSC project as Teresa's supervisor.

Manicka Thomas, new site coordinator of Fairview School, is working to encourage residents of the Fairview neighborhood to choose Fairview as their children's school. Like Teresa, Manicka is devoting a great amount of effort toward improving parent involvement in the school. She hopes to increase this involvement by emphasizing the school's Parent Advisory Committee and recruiting parent volunteers for each classroom. Fundraising is another key priority for Fairview School. The students had a successful canned goods drive and will begin collecting Box Tops for Education in the spring.

New UD interns working at the five Neighborhood School Centers include juniors **Dani Hosfeld** and **Kelley Sheehan** who recently joined Site Coordinator Manicka Thomas at Fairview School. Edison's Site Coordinator Nina Carter welcomed sophomore **Stephanie Bales**. Sophomores **Mike Veselik** and **Alex Zyck** have been assisting Site Coordinator Mario at Ruskin School. Sophomore **Kata Lucas** started in January at Kiser School with Site Coordinator Teresa Wendell. The site coordinators also bid farewell to two interns, **Nick Pesola** (Fairview) and **Michelle Timmerman** (Cleveland), who will be leaving for student teaching and other academic requirements.

The NSC team looks forward to working with these new team members. Their contributions will enable the continued success of the project. 



Above: Nick Pesola, Fairview School intern, will be leaving Fairview to explore other academic opportunities. Thanks to Nick for all his hard work.

Below: The five Neighborhood School Centers site coordinators, clockwise from top left, Teresa Wendell, Kym Beasley, Manicka Thomas, Mario and Nina Carter.





Above: Tracey Horan, former education outreach intern, talks about water resources as students from St. Albert's build a model aquifer.

Below: River Stewards and staff in front of their river education booth at the Hamilton River Days Festival in September.

THE RIVERS INSTITUTE: MAKING WAVES IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

By Leslie King, Coordinator of the Rivers Institute


Last semester brought a wave of education and community outreach opportunities to the Rivers Institute. With more than 35 River Stewards now in the program and a grant award from the Greater Dayton Conservation Fund to expand our outreach programs, we were able to provide many services to the UD and Dayton communities. In early September, the Rivers Institute returned to the Hamilton River Days Festival to set up a booth including four river education stations for children.

Next came an invitation from St. Albert School's Girls in Science program to teach an afterschool session. In October, **Tracey Horan** piloted another one of the potential modules for the "river mobile," a traveling educational station she has been developing during her internship with the Rivers Institute. Tracey talked with 12 girls about the formation of our aquifer, groundwater resources and drinking water, helped them build a model aquifer and asked them to create a poster to share what they learned with their school.

Shortly after the St. Albert's project, Holy Angels School asked the Rivers Institute to think "out-of-the-box" to develop a way to work with their fifth- to sixth-grade science and social studies classes. This project became the culmination of Tracey's work over the past few years, as she developed a six-week river explorations curriculum for grade schools, titled "The Makings of a River City." The River Stewards are eager to share these lesson plans with Holy Angels this winter and many more schools in the future.

Another major wave for the Rivers Institute in the fall was the continued development of the River Leadership Curriculum, two courses to be offered next school year. Students, staff, faculty and community partners collaborated throughout the semester to establish a basis for the capabilities and understandings students should possess after completing the courses. These student learning outcomes have been drafted and the curriculum committee is currently meeting to plan for the next stages of development. This is an exciting opportunity for all UD students to enroll in an interdisciplinary course sequence about rivers, taught by teams of faculty, River Stewards and community partners.

The Rivers Institute also made waves outside the classroom last fall, facilitating river clean-ups, teaching basic kayaking at the pools of Trotwood Madison High School, welcoming domestic and foreign visitors to campus and to Dayton, and keeping a strong presence on the river before the weather turned cold.

With the beginning of the spring semester, the Rivers Institute welcomes the next big wave: three new undergraduate interns, the departure of two interns and a new graduate assistant. **McLean Johnson, A.J. Ferguson** and **Bethany Renner** have begun working as interns. **Maggie Varga** transitioned from an undergraduate intern to a graduate assistant and **Tracey Horan** departed to begin full-time student teaching. Thanks, Maggie and Tracey, for all your excellent work as undergraduate students. 



GRADS AND UNDERGRADS JOIN FITZ CENTER TEAM

By Emily Klein

During the past six months, the Fitz Center has welcomed many new student employees into the rooms of St. Joseph Hall and Zehler Hall.


The Semester of Service program added three new faces to its ranks. Returning to her alma mater, **Kathy Trick** is the graduate assistant coordinator working toward her master's in public administration. Two undergraduate interns assist Kathy and Brother Ed Zamierowski, S.M. **Krysten Cotone** is a 2008 Summer of Service participant and Bonner Leader. She is a senior intervention specialist major from Cleveland, Ohio. **Danielle DeArment** is a sophomore marketing major from Findlay, Ohio.

Joanne Troha and Andy Badinghaus with the Fitz Center's Community Service Learning program are now receiving the help of two undergraduate interns. **Beth Geiger** is a senior psychology major and a family development minor. Her participation in Semester of Service in 2009 brought her back to the Fitz Center as an intern. **Kristin Whalen**, a volunteer at Ruskin Elementary (one of Dayton's Neighborhood School Centers), is a sophomore accounting and entrepreneurship major.

Most recently, the Rivers Institute added a graduate assistant. After her graduation in December, **Maggie Varga** rejoined the Fitz Center in January. As an undergraduate, Maggie was a River Steward and interned with the Rivers Institute. She will pursue a master's in business administration.

Anna Hurley is the Dayton Civic Scholars program's graduate assistant. She is a graduate of the College of Wooster and is enrolled in the master's in public administration program.

Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., the Ferree Professor of Social Justice, and his assistant Judy Keyes are working with a new graduate assistant. **Mark Gore**, a 2009 UD graduate, remains at the University to pursue his studies in the master's in theological studies program.

The general operations of Fitz Center are also benefiting from two new assistants. **Emily Wilhelm**, first-year psychology major, is assisting Suzette Pico and Judy Keyes with administrative needs of the Center. Former undergraduate intern **Emily Klein** is the graduate assistant to Executive Director Dick Ferguson. She is working toward her master's in public administration. The Fitz Center also congratulates **Lindsey Bungenstock**, Neighborhood School Centers and Leadership in Building Communities seminar graduate assistant, who graduated in December. She has accepted a job with the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. 



Above: Graduate assistant Kathy Trick (seated) and undergraduate intern Danielle DeArment work with Fitz Center's Semester of Service. Graduate assistant Mark Gore assists Brother Ray Fitz, S.M.

Below: Graduate assistant Anna Hurley, undergraduate intern Beth Geiger and graduate assistants Emily Klein and Maggie Varga help to administer many of the Fitz Center's projects.






Above: Senior Abbey Rymarczyk worked at We Care Arts! during the summer of 2009.

Below: The six Semester of Service participants for spring 2010 and Kathy Trick, program coordinator, spent a week together for the program's orientation this January.

SEMESTER OF SERVICE: STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Again this year, 20 UD students will devote themselves to the service of others through the Semester of Service program. Here is what the students have to say about their experiences:

"Working with clients at We Care Arts! proved to me that every person is unique and has a story. The clients all interact; they all care for one another in such a way that does not happen in a typical classroom. Every person is learning something new, whether it is with art, about another person, or through a life lesson; every person in the room has taken away something from their day at We Care Arts!, and I feel so blessed to have the opportunity see their gifts blossom." —**Abbey Rymarczyk**, Summer 2009

"My clients at Daybreak are choosing to construct, or renovate, themselves, build foundations and frameworks and learn to build doors that let certain people in and keep certain people out. I also believe that passion is a key component. Just as architects are driven by their desire to construct buildings from wood, stone or bricks, the teenagers at Daybreak are driven by their desire to bulldoze their old foundations and establish new ones. Architects will admit that they cannot work alone, and neither can Daybreak adolescents. That's where people like me come in: to offer a helping hand, maybe suggest a hint as to where to place that piece of wood or brick in their construction. Buildings, the finished product, provide something in return: shelter, a home, a new life; the Daybreak teenagers provide me a new sense of respect, admiration and modesty. I can help them build themselves and their futures and the finished product will (inadvertently or not) return the favor to help me build my own future and strengthen my own character. That's why I love this job." —**Alisa Bartel**, Fall 2009 

Six Students Join Semester of Service in January

By Kathy Trick, Graduate Assistant

In the beginning of January, six students began the Semester of Service program, including five seniors. **Derek Henderson**, psychology major, is serving at Salvation Army's Booth House. **John Thunander** is a marketing and finance major and has been placed at Adventure Central. **Mark Motz**, a religious studies major, is working with East End Community Services. **Samantha Montgomery**, psychology major, is serving at Dakota Center, and **Katie Zehner**, psychology major, has joined Dayton Christian Center. Sophomore sociology major **Andrew Kowalski** is serving at Daybreak.



NEW GRADUATE COMMUNITY FELLOWS MAKING THEIR MARKS IN DAYTON


By Lindsey Bungenstock, Graduate Assistant

The first semester for the newest cohort of Graduate Community Fellows has come to a close. Though they are new to their roles, **Chinenye Ikeme**, **Angela Wasserman**, **Drew Formentini** and **Erin Anderson** have already been given important roles and responsibilities.

Chinenye Ikeme, a clinical psychology graduate student, was placed at Samaritan Behavioral Health, Inc., which offers behavioral health services to clients in Montgomery and Preble Counties, including Young Children's Assessment and Treatment Services, Samaritan Counseling Alternatives Adult Outpatient, Preble County Mental Health Services, and several others. The agency has been rotating her through its different departments so that she has an opportunity to work with each program director on special projects. She has enjoyed this learning opportunity so far and says, "I look forward to all the learning and helping experiences I will continue to have as a student and Fellow during the next one and a half years."

The Catholic Education Collaborative (CEC) has received community counseling graduate student Angela Wasserman as their Fellow. The CEC seeks to help schools and parishes within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Dayton Deanery to better utilize their community and individual resources. During her fellowship, she has been primarily working with the Student Support Services branch of the CEC. In this capacity, Angela has been working on research and survey analysis, evaluating the summer school program and writing grants.

Drew Formentini has been working at the Dayton Christian Center (DCC) and is a graduate student in the school counseling program as well. DCC is a faith-based community center that serves both the east and west sides of Dayton. In the fall semester, Drew developed an afterschool program for the children of east Dayton and has worked to provide an engaging place for children to come for help with homework, sports and other enriching programs. His goal is "to get in touch with local organizations with the intent of facilitating partnerships to better use the Center."

Finally, Erin Anderson has been working at the Dakota Center, a community center that serves the west side of Dayton. She is a graduate student in public administration. She has been working with Executive Director Sharon Mitchell to learn how to run a nonprofit organization and to reestablish the MacFarlane Neighborhood Association. Through this work, Erin has been doing community organizing in the neighborhood. Erin shares, "I believe my work as a Graduate Community Fellow will give me new experiences and opportunities to put my faith and passion for justice into action. It is great to be connected to the broader Dayton community as I work on my graduate studies." 

*"I feel that my experience working at the Catholic Education Collaborative will be very useful in helping me see how a nonprofit operates."
—Angela Wasserman*



Left: Graduate Community Fellows meet twice each month with their mentor, Brother Ray Fitz, S.M. He facilitates their reflection on the work they are doing in addition to offering them advice and support.



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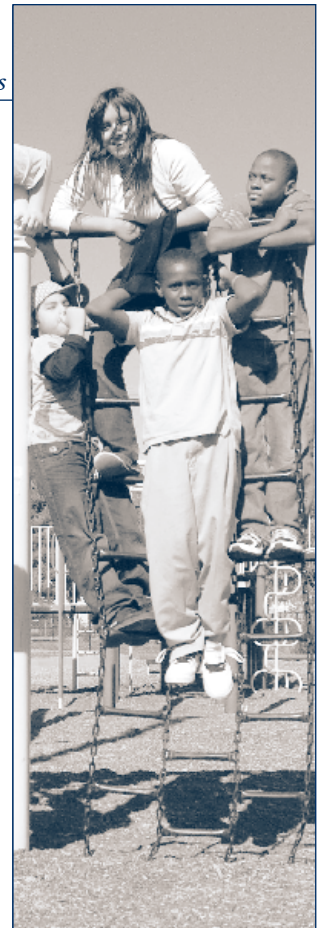
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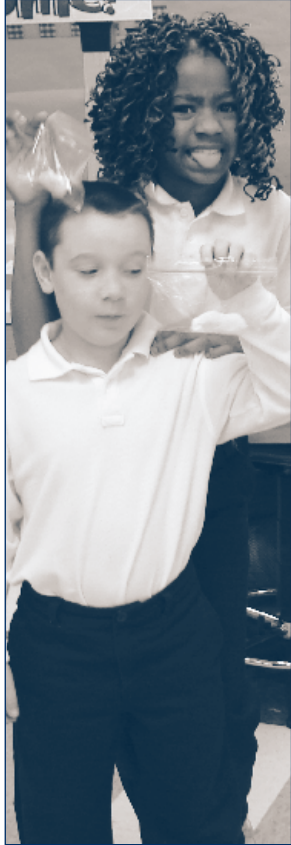
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By Emily Klein, Graduate Assistant

The Fitz Center was the recipient of many gracious donations during 2009. The list of donors from January-November 2009 is printed in this newsletter (pp. 7-15) as an expression of our appreciation for their support of our work. For our donors who contributed gifts in December of 2009, we apologize that we are unable to list your names in this issue, but we will recognize you in a future issue.

Each year, the Fitz Center touches more than 400 University of Dayton students through the Dayton Civic Scholars program, the River Stewards program, Semester of Service, Graduate Community Fellows, Service Learning and the Leadership in Building Communities seminar. In turn, these students have contributed their time, talent and energy to support the Dayton area. Our projects, which total more than 30 in number, have significant impact on the wellbeing of our community. We are able to help neighborhoods grow, support our schools and help contribute solutions to Dayton's barriers.

This year, for the second time in a row, the University of Dayton was recognized by Evan Dobbelle with the Saviors of Our Cities recognition. UD was ranked second among all U.S. universities and first among Catholic universities for its involvement in the surrounding community. In 2006, UD was ranked third. The community building and engagement work of the Fitz Center has contributed to this recognition.

Generosity of the Center's donors and other supporters makes this all possible. Thank you.

